



**Biological survey of the Al Zubarah buffer zone, 2012**

**End of season report; Names of fish and other marine animals in Qatar.**

Provencal, Philippe

*Publication date:*  
2012

*Document version*  
Peer reviewed version

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Provencal, P. (2012). *Biological survey of the Al Zubarah buffer zone, 2012: End of season report; Names of fish and other marine animals in Qatar*. Statens Naturhistoriske Museum.

# BIOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE AL ZUBARAH BUFFER ZONE, 2012

## End of Season Report

### Names of fish and other marine animals in Qatar and observations and sampling of fish in the buffer zone.

*Philippe Provençal*  
*Zoologisk Museum,*  
*Statens Naturhistoriske Museum*  
*Universitetsparken 15*  
*2100 København Ø*

## Introduction

1. My main field of study was the gathering of local fish names in Qatar in general.
- 2 My secondary field of study was to make observations and sample specimens of fish in close cooperation with lecturer Peter Rask Møller, Zoologisk Museum.



A specimen of *Gerres acinaces* gathered during the field work 2012. Specimen and photo, P. Provençal.

### 1. Local Fish Names:

The study was effectuated by visits to a smaller fish shop in the town of Shamāl and to a larger fish market in ad-Dawḥah (Dohah). The sellers were asked for the names of the fishes displayed. As all sellers were from the Indian subcontinent, the names provided were subsequently compared with the names provided by K. Siwasubramaniam & M.A. Ibrahim (1982) and Wajeeh S. Al-Baharna (1986) whose publications were at the Zubarah camp. This comparisons were effectuated on the same day or the following day after the interviews at the fish market.

### 1. Names gathered from a fish shop in Shamāl 18 March 2012.

1	<i>Siganus javus</i>	ṣāfī	صَافِي
2	<i>Rhabdosargus sarba</i>	qurqufān	قُرْقُفَان
3	<i>Carangoides chrysophys</i>	suwaydī	سَوَيْدِي
4	Coral groupers <i>Serranidae</i> spp. (common designation)	hāmūr	هَامُور
5	<i>Alepes mate</i>	jīš	جِيش
6	<i>Lethrinidae</i> (common designation)	šafirī	شَعْرِي
7	Queenfish <i>Scomberoides commersonianus</i>	laḥlā (laḥlāḥ)	لَحْلَا (لَحْلَا ح)
8	Crab	qabqab	قَبْقَب
9	Cuttlefish <i>Sepia</i> sp.	ḥaṭāq	خَتَاق

### Names gathered from a poster in ad-Dawḥah on 21 March 2012

	Art		
10	Queenfish <i>Scomberoides commersonianus</i>	basār	بَسَار
11	Parrot fish <i>Scaridae</i> sp.	qīš (vacalisation according to the pronunciation provided at the fish market)	قِيش

Names gathered at the fish market in Dawḥah on 21 March.

	Art		
12	Doublebar bream <i>Acanthopagrus bifasciatus</i>	fuskar	فُسْكَر
13	<i>Scomberomorus commersoni</i>	kan <sup>°</sup> ad	كَنْعَد
14	<i>Gnathanodon speciosus</i>	rubīb	رُبَيْب
15	<i>Mylio berda</i>	šu <sup>°</sup> m	شُعْم
16	Barracuda <i>Sphyraena</i> sp.	jidd	جِدَّ
17	<i>Arius thalassinus</i>	kim (Classical Arabic) čim (Qaṭar dialect)	كِم
18	<i>Scaridae</i>	qīš	قِيش
19	<i>Lethrinus</i> spp. (common designation)	šu <sup>°</sup> rī	شُعْرِي
20	<i>Rhonciscus stridens</i>	ḥīrah	خِیرَة
21	<i>Nemipterus</i> sp.	bāsī	بَاسِي
22	Trevallly <i>Carangidae</i> sp.	zubaydī	زُبَيْدِي
23	Blue Crab	kukūb	كُكُوب
24	Shark <i>Pleurotremata</i> sp.	nawr	نَوْر
25	Coral groupers <i>Serranidae</i> spp. (common designation)	hāmūr, hamūr	هَامُور ، هَمُور
26	<i>Platax orbicularis</i>	ḥammūd, hammūd	حَمُود ، هَمُود
27	<i>Euthynnus affinis</i> (identity not certain)	ḍabān, dabbān	ضَبَّان ، دَبَّان
28	Coral hind <i>Cephalopholis miniatus</i>	ridāmūr	رِدَامُور
29	Sole <i>Soleidae</i> sp.	mūsā	مُوسَا
30	Black tail bream <i>Diplodus sargus</i>	kirkafān	كِرْكَفَان



31	Needlefish <i>Tylosurus leiurus</i> , <i>Ablennes hians</i>	°āqūl (correct pronunciation persumably ḥākūl)	عَاقُول ( حَاكُول )-
32	Pony fish <i>Leiognathus</i> sp.	zubaydī	زُبَيْدِي
33	<i>Rachycentron canadus</i>	sikkīn(correct pronunciation persumably sīkin)	سِكِّين ( سِكِين )-
34	Greater amberjack <i>Seriola dumerili</i>	ḥamām	حَمَام
35	mullet <i>Mugilidae</i> sp.	būrī	بُورِي
36	Red goatfish <i>Parupeneus</i> sp.	sultān Ibrāhīm	سُلْطَانِ إِبْرَاهِيم
37	Halfbeack <i>Hemiramphidae</i> sp.	surūs	سُرُوس
38	Flathead <i>Thysanophrys</i> sp.	baḥr	بَحْر

### Main conclusions from the work undertaken this season

The list of fish names from Qatar bears witness to the elaborate knowledge of the sea and sea creatures found in the coastal population around the Arabian Peninsula. This knowledge which manifest itself in af wide vocabulary regarding sea animals is already documented by the reseach of Peter Forsskål (1775) and earlier on by the description of fishes and sea creatures found in Arabic geographical and scientific texts from the Classical period.

The gathered fish names show interesting features. When compared with names for the same species from the Red Sea, it becomes obvious that not only the notion of species are the same on both shores of the Arabian Peninsula, but the notion of genera remain the same. Thus Coral Groupers *Serranidae* spp. are designated by a common designation both in the Red Sea and in the Arabic Gulf, but this designation varies with the locality. In Egypt and in other places around the Red Sea the groupers as a group are called *kuṣār* while their common designation in the Qatar is *hamūr*. In Egypt the members of the gender *Lethrinus* have ša°ūl as common desingation while in Qatar, they have šu°rī as common designation (personal observaations).

This means, that the Red Sea and Qatar represent two different linguistic entities when it comes to the lexical contents of the fish fauna, but the notion of which species belong together in families or genera remain the same across the Arabian Peninsula. More interesting is the fact, that some species, e.g. mullets *mugilidae*, have the same name as the one used in Arabic in the Mediterranean. In Egypt, this could be explained by the proximity of the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, but the fact that mullets are called by the name būrī in both the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and Qatar show an interesting continuity to which must be added a historical continuity as this fish name is well known in Classical Arabic, for instance in the list of 79 fishes and aquatic animals included in the descriptions of the island of Tinnīs in

Lake Manzalah in the Delta of the Nile which are given by Yāqūt ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥamāwī (1179-1229) in his *Muʿjam al-Buldān* and by Zakariāʾ b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī (1203-1283) in his Cosmography, *Kitāb ʿAjāʾib al-Maḥlūqāt wa Gharāʾib al-Mawjūdāt*.

Something similar could be said of the name of the red goatfish. The Mediterranean species of red goatfish *Mullus barbatus* and *Mullus surmuletus* are called sulṭān Ibrāhīm in Egypt and the Syro-Palestinian region (Oman 1966 and personal observations), and a red species of mullet is known by this name at the fish market in Doha. In the Red Sea, this name is also found but it is not very common (cf. Provençal 1997, Oman 1992, personal observations).

This study is part of a my and B. Skaarup's project **The Arabic Animal-Names of Forsskål's Descriptiones Animalium** housed at the Zoological Museum in Copenhagen, which aims at systematizing the Arabic names of primarily fishes and other marine animals noted by Peter Forsskål during the expedition *The Arabian Voyage 1761-1767*. This material has not yet been adequately studied. This systematisation includes naturally investigations in contemporary ichthyological nomenclature around the Arabic Peninsula and in the Middle East as well as studies and inquiries in fish nomenclature in Classical Arabic geographical and scientific texts.

## 2. Observations and sampling of fishes.

The following fish species were observed within or close the buffer zone: *Pastinachus sephen*, *Lutjanus fulviflammus*, *Lethrinus nebulosus*, *Acanthopagrus bifasciatus*, *Diplodus sargus*, *Ecsenius pulcher*, *Gerres acinaces*, *Siganus javus*. The results of my secondary field of study will be treated in Peter Rask Møller's report.

## Literature

Al-Baharna, W. S. 1986: *Fishes of Bahrein*, Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture, Directorate of Fisheries, Bahrein.

Forsskål, P. 1775: *Descriptiones Animalium*, post mortem auctoris edidit Carsten Niebuhr. Möller, Copenhagen.

Oman, G. 1966: *L'ittionimia nei Paesi Arabi del Mediterraneo*. Quaderni dell'archivio linguistico veneto. Casa editrice Leo S. Olschiki. Firenze.

Oman, G. 1992: *L'ittionimia nei paesi arabi dei Mari Rosso, Arabico e del Golfo Persico (o Arabico)*, Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli.

Provençal, P. (1995) *Enquête lexicographique sur les noms d'animaux en arabe /A lexicographic survey of arabic animal names*. Ph. D. afhandling ved Carsten Niebuhr Instituttet for Nærorientalske Studier, Københavns Universitet.

Provençal, P. (1997) Animal names gathered by interviews with members of the Muzīn tribe in Sinai. *Acta orientalia* vol. 58 pp. 35 -46.

Siwasubramaniam, K. & M.A. Ibrahim 1982: *Common Fishes of Qatar*, Marine Science Department, Faculty of Science, University of Qatar, Doha.